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Esquire

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

Who's man enough for this woman?

(The winning of Cher, page 82)

The next Depression
by Alvin Toffler

Jaworski's conscience
by Brock Brower

Surefire inflation dodge:
start your own country

The kids who
make the movies

French fries:
America's secret guilt



Esquire

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

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The Amazing New-Country Caper

by Andrew St. George

Capitalist revolution, the ultimate solution

For the first time in history, the successful managers of America's economy—its entrepreneurs, financiers, merchandisers, investors—are talking rebellion. A kind of rebellion, anyway. There is no call to subvert the Republic, only to abandon it. In increasing numbers, America's most affluent and active elites are threatening to withdraw their funds, their assets, ultimately even themselves and their families from the centers of the U.S. economy, which many of them seem to consider done for. Nicholas von Hoffman, the acerbic and preternaturally foresighted columnist of *The Washington Post*, found that in some of mid-America's best executive clubs, "There is talk of buying gold coins and keeping them in the office safe, of owning a piece of land to retreat to when the trouble starts." The hero of the year's most durable best seller, *You Can Profit From a Monetary Crisis*, by Harry Browne, is "Peter Panic," the quintessential American small investor. He is in flight from his own national economy. Transferring every penny he owns from U.S. investments into Swiss banks and South African gold stocks, Peter Panic practically doubles his worth from 1970 to '73; then he is ready to take the most important step—to find himself a secluded rural retreat to weather the nation's coming troubles.

But retreat *where*? That's the basic problem none of these doom-sayers grapples with. A seventy-five-thousand-dollar-a-year man who pulls up lock, stock and bond

investments to move to a secluded farmhouse may find there a measure of protection from random violence—or he may find, if real trouble starts, that in his isolation he's utterly defenseless.

Unless, of course, he has planned ahead—as far ahead and as carefully as the originators of what one can only call, for the moment, the Abaco Plan (it remains to be seen by events, of course, whether the Abaco planners were as wise and prescient as they were farsighted and careful). The originators of the Abaco idea were the first to implement the urge to abandon America with a concrete design, including a destination, provision for personal and financial safety, monetary reward and even a Utopian social program. Though the men behind Abaco are nearly the opposite of the commune-seekers of the late Sixties and early Seventies, their objectives are much the same. They seek a way out and a return to fundamental values, but their most fundamental value is the proposition that each of them should be many times a millionaire, untroubled by inflation.

By the time you read this, the men of Abaco may have accomplished the first stages of their program (in which case you will have read about them in the newspapers)—or they may have failed and be in the process of regrouping. But I'd like you to meet them as I did, at a lunch in Washington, D.C., last May.

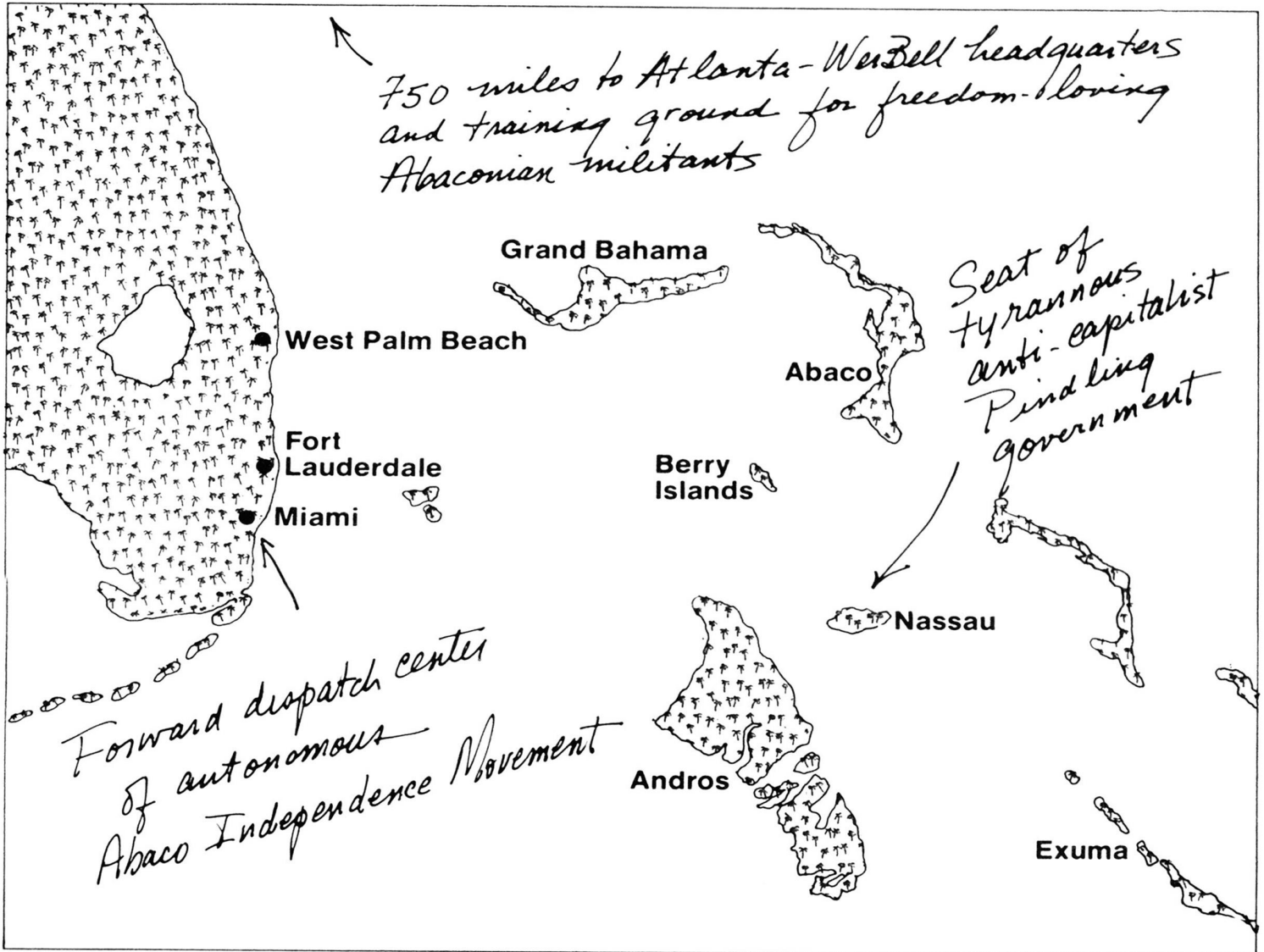
"Cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of War"?

No, sir! Not here in Duke Zeibert's place you don't; this well-bred Washington restaurant admits no animals. Not even if they're wearing eighty-dollar Church's shoes. Not even if they happen to be the familiar old two-legged war hounds who were made immortal in the Shakespearean line, and who are being made fashionable again this year by the success of Frederick Forsyth's latest book, *The Dogs of War*.

Here we are in 1974, murky, angst-ridden, confusing old '74, and with Forsyth's novel a best seller, hailed as "soon to be a major movie," deferentially praised for its "reportorial realism," more and more people are talking about "the dogs of war" as if they knew what the phrase meant: an international conspiracy of financiers and killer commandos who wage mercenary mini-wars in the quest for maxi-payoffs. What nonsense! A drink at Duke Zeibert's polished bar will give us a better view of reality than Fred Forsyth's collected works.

Take Mister Mitchell Livingston WerBell here, a ruddy, jovial, moustached chap, sipping his preprandial Tanqueray martini extra dry. It's obvious that if there were anything doggy or bellicose about WerBell, he wouldn't be lurching where he is—at the head of the old Duke's prize front corner table.

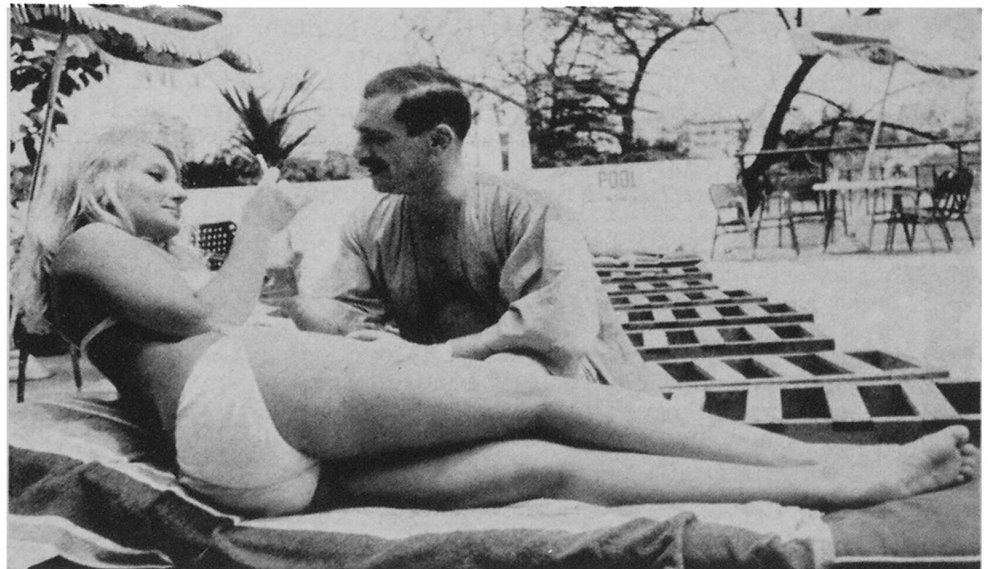
Or take the tall, well-tailored man sitting next to WerBell. It is plain at a glance that he looks and—having just been overheard asking, "May I have the pickles, please?"—sounds like a patrician



Abaco, site of the Abaco Independence Movement, lies to the right of West Palm Beach. With seven hundred square miles of tropical land and only seven thousand native inhabitants, it may be an ideal place for Americans to start a brave new inflation-proof country.



The Simón Bolívar of the new Abaco: Mitchell Livingston WerBell, firearms maker.



If WerBell and his friends succeed in their revolution, life on Abaco (for the ruling classes) may resemble this 1965 photo of WerBell at ease. Native inhabitants not shown.

London clubman. And that's just what he is: Robert Hamilton, Baron of Belhaven and Stenton, a distinguished member of the House of Lords.

In fact, a good look at the legendary Mitch WerBell—millionaire firearms tycoon, designer of the world's best muzzle silencer, adventurer, friend of dictators and C.I.A. agents, manipulator of the luck of small nations—and at the seven men who are his luncheon guests today reminds us that, in real life, the strategy of private wars demands, first of all, *finesse*.

In Forsyth's telling, "the dogs of war" get together only to make hard-boiled conversation about "knocking off an entire republic" with the aid of World War II machine pistols laboriously concealed in oil drums. WerBell's world is different. A top executive of Defense Services International, Military Armaments Corporation and Sionics Inc., he designs and manufactures his own weaponry, which are recognized all over the world as the most sophisticated small arms obtainable. Having acquired a taste for irregular warfare as an O.S.S. commando leader behind Japanese lines in World War II, WerBell is rumored to have taken a hand in a long string of mini-wars since then, from the South China Sea to the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. But WerBell frowns on crass badinage, especially with food. At Zeibert's the table talk is mostly about gastronomy today, in part because the dill sours and soft-shell crabs are truly remarkable, in part because the host at the neighboring table is Clifton Daniel, the silver-haired Washington bureau chief of *The New York Times*.

But by the time coffee and Courvoisier arrive, Daniel and his party depart. WerBell lights a finely veined Montecruz double corona. "I talked to the island today," he says, and suddenly the table is all attention.

The island"—that's what this lunch is all about. The island is Abaco; not yet an independent republic, nor a center of commerce and finance, but by no means a negligible coral hump, either. In fact, Abaco is the second-largest landmass in the Bahamas—Great Abaco and Little Abaco, surrounded by a sprinkling of small reefs and cays, over seven hundred square miles of fertile tropical paradise. Mitch WerBell and his guests have come to Washington to discuss a project

straight out of a Forsyth script: the take-over of Abaco—an action that will allow these men to get themselves and their money profitably out of the U.S.

To be sure, any resemblance to popular fiction stops short with the basic idea. Commando politics is dead. It will no longer do to break open a case of bootleg hand grenades and storm the palace. In fact, Abaco *has* no palace. What it does have is six to seven thousand native inhabitants who lead lives ranging from quiet stagnation to mute poverty.

To be conquered, Abaco must be attacked—that fundamental aspect of territorial expansion has not changed in four thousand years—but in an age of psychological warfare, motivational research, subliminal propaganda and behavior modification, the tactics must be different. WerBell's first assault on Abaco has been psychological. With great skill and ruthless persuasiveness, the citizens of Abaco are convinced, step by step, that they must become an independent nation; that becoming an independent nation is the greatest, most rewarding thing in the whole wide world; that it is *they*, the citizenry of Abaco, who must urgently need and demand and fight for status as a self-governing commonwealth.

"I talked to the island for almost an hour this morning," WerBell repeats gently, now that everyone around the table is watching him with close attention. "They finally got the slips. They've already distributed half of them. They'll make a one-spot run this weekend and see how they score. They think it'll be sixty to sixty-five percent."

No translation is needed. As the Watergate tapes have demonstrated, men who share a secret scenario come to share a secret language, as if by osmosis. WerBell's remarks reveal that he has had a long-distance conversation this morning with one of his chief operatives on Abaco, using a clear phone line—i.e., a connection involving untapped phone numbers. (If the conversation had not involved a key agent on Abaco, and if the phone had been suspect, the conversation would have been brief.)

The agent on the island—most likely C. R. "Chuck" Hall, who has served as WerBell's principal operative on Abaco during most of the Summer of 1974—reported that the special courier who occasionally arrives from Miami aboard a small amphibian seaplane, bringing consignments which the Nassau au-

thorities are not supposed to see, had delivered a shipment of blank survey forms. These polling slips, devised by a prestigious U.S. opinion-research firm, are to monitor sentiment on Abaco in favor of independence—not just once, but week by week, as WerBell's psywar campaign unfolds.

Furthermore, WerBell learned this morning that a test sampling focused on a single Abaco settlement, perhaps Marsh Harbour or Fox Town, had been scheduled by his agents on Abaco for the coming weekend. The organizers expected to poll between sixty and sixty-five percent in favor of independence—an impressive score, reflecting the fact that the covert political campaign of WerBell and Co. is in its sixth month.

Are these people *serious*? They are indeed—not merely serious but experienced, powerful and farsighted. Three of WerBell's luncheon guests are former C.I.A. career officers, all three recently retired from its clandestine services branch, where they acquired invaluable experience in the manipulation, dismantling and rearranging of governments. John Muldoon, who is WerBell's principal agent in Washington, has served as a PolAd—a political adviser—in Vietnam and Africa. Walter Mäckem has seen similar duty in a number of Southeast Asian countries, and Ted Roussos, a tanned, greying man, has been a senior C.I.A. clandestine services official in the Mediterranean—Italy, the Balkans, above all Greece—for almost twenty years before he retired last year to join, ostensibly, the management of the Astor, Washington's best Greek restaurant, long owned by his family.

These men are not war hounds or gunslingers. Their ethos and telos thrust not toward violence but toward *control*. They are technetronic conflict managers—planners, organizers, and only occasionally the manipulators of violent action. Muldoon is a tall, pink, deep-chested Irishman faithfully cast in the mold from which most of the chief inspectors of large American police departments seem to spring. Mäckem looks like an Ivy League graduate instructor, blond, button-down, horn-rimmed, alert, with a Hong Kong Racquet Club tie to match his navy blazer. The pipe-smoking Roussos, in his flawlessly cut English tropicals, demonstrates what the French mean when they say

distingué—the aging Charles Boyer plunked in a spy scenario, looking not so much the part of James Bond as his enigmatic superior, M. All three follow WerBell's briefing with small nods and half smiles of approval.

WerBell talks on, his eyes on the pearl-grey ash of his cigar, his growly voice low. There's work to be done—lots of it. The day known as U.D.I.—that is, the date when Abaco breaks away from the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence—is tentatively set for New Year's Day of 1975. The operations required to seize control of the island have been disguised as the "uprising" of an "autonomous, locally organized independence movement" with such amazing skill that none of the world's major press has spotted what is going on. A number of seemingly local organizations and deceptively "ad hoc" groups have sprung up to handle those activities that cannot be kept from public view—propaganda, organization, and so forth. There are: the Abaco Independence Movement (known as A.I.M.); the Abaco Development Council; Friends of Abaco; the "Prosperity '74" Economic Conference on Abaco.

Every one of these cover organizations has been clandestinely created, financed and managed from WerBell's headquarters in Powder Springs, a suburb of Atlanta. To coordinate their activities—propaganda, recruitment, proselytization, the importation of distinguished

guest speakers from the U.S. who preach the independence gospel buttressed by a variety of economic and political promises—a carefully camouflaged "forward headquarters" has been set up in Miami. A large, deceptively suburban house at 1666 S.W. Twelfth Street hides a high-powered SSB radio station, a "dispatch center" for handling cargo traffic with Abaco via a small seaplane, and a halfway house for promising independence militants who are discreetly flown to Miami. On arrival, the independence activists are either enrolled in political indoctrination courses held in Miami, or, having been provided with plane tickets under various cover names, they are flown farther north to a training base near Atlanta, where they receive paramilitary training under the command of a former U.S. infantry officer, Col. Robert Bayard.

Col. Bayard, a tall, leathery man in the Gary Cooper mold, with grey eyes and a shock of reddish brown hair, is the officer in charge of "special personnel." Young, muscular, unattached Abaconian independence enthusiasts, whose commitment to the cause of U.D.I. is especially strong, are given seven weeks of supersecret instruction in the use of small arms, demolition devices and other commando skills at the proving grounds of Mitch WerBell's arms company. Proving grounds? Well, WerBell makes plenty of gadgets that bear testing. His companies produce a deadly sniper rifle, "accurized," automat-

ed, utterly silent, with the built-in capability of plugging a beer can at a thousand yards—"We guarantee *this* much," says WerBell—and a special sighting device which enables the rifleman to fix his target day or night. With Gordan Ingram, WerBell has designed and produces the incredible Ingram, a miniaturized submachine gun no larger than the familiar .45 service automatic, eight hundred rounds per minute, the whole shooting match about as noisy as a very fast Ping-Pong match—"pac . . . pac . . . pac-pacpac"—the barrel is a patented WerBell silencer. There is plenty of "sophisticated equipment" to test. But among visitors who have been invited there more than once, the place—electronic security fencing, the dog patrols, the imperious warning signs, the helipad for combat choppers, the airstrip for the company Learjet—among people who call Mitch by his first name, the place is known as "the farm."

Training special personnel is a rigorous regime, and Col. Bayard keeps himself in shape; at Zeibert's he takes grilled liver and a single beer, and lunches in silence, seldom intervening in the discussion, occasionally glancing at his wrist chronometer—he must be back at the farm by nightfall, and as a mere colonel, he must "fly commercial"—no Learjets pre-warmed on the ready strip.

Setting out the final phases of the Abaco take-over campaign, Wer-



Abaco's head honcho: millionaire, ideologue and philosopher Michael C. Oliver.



Ah, yes, the seven thousand native inhabitants; after the revolution, every Abaconian will get a certificate like this one, worth one acre of homestead land absolutely free.

Bell sounds as smoothly and playfully Machiavellian as the senior account executive of a medium-sized ad agency plotting a tricky but not really *make-or-break* media blitz. The support of the locals is essential: "To get it, we're gonna change their self-image." It's easy; just listen. We're gonna use only the *truth*. Abaconians think of themselves . . . well, as people of *modest* means. In reality, they're beggars hunkered on a mountain of gold. And this is by no means another hollow hype. No effective psy-war concept is.

Stretching across the central and southern reaches of Abaco there are 300,000—*three hundred thousand*—acres of undeveloped prime land, potentially, and by no means unrealistically, worth hundreds of millions of dollars. This is virgin soil. Under British colonial rule these were crown lands, reserved for the sovereign, and now, under the newly self-governing Bahamas Commonwealth, administered by the Pindling government in Nassau, they're still government land, strictly no trespassing for private citizens.

Just suppose, the scenario goes, that on January 1, 1975, good old torpid hung over "sorry-general-the-switchboard-is-closed" New Year's Day, Great Abaco and Little Abaco and all the lesser cays, reefs and coralback adjacent thereto, declare themselves an independent republic. This vast virgin acreage would be—*up for grabs*. Every native-born Abaconian could line up for his divvy.

"Will he get it?" asks Ted Roussos at the restaurant.

"Ohoho, you bet your boots," says WerBell. "Here, see if I can find this stuff. . . ." He flips through his attaché case, custom-made by Peal's of London, pulls out some gold-rimmed, elaborately printed bonds. "Here . . . the Abaco National Land Trust Beneficiary Share Certificate. And here's the other gizmo, the Land Entitlement Certificate. This says every native Abaconian adult gets his one-acre homesite free and clear after independence. And on the beneficiary share, he'll get some of the major lease revenues. Here's the tender, lays it all on the line. You bet they'll get a share. Provided, the tender says right here, '*Provided that the political situation in Abaco is just and fair.*'"

"Just and fair," says Roussos softly. "Of course, just and fair. If the National Land Whatnot gives each native a one-acre homesite, it will give them all, man, woman and

children all together, one percent of their own land. Who will decide what's just and fair?"

"Ah . . . probably I will."

There he is . . . the low voice, the bony figure in the forty-nine-dollar Robert Hall drip-dry suit, the jacket bulge between chest and armpit contouring not the familiar shoulder holster but a Hewlett-Packard minicalculator: Mike Oliver *likes* sitting at the far end of the table with a notebook beside the butter plate. He has lunched here prudently and salubriously on nothing but cold fish and iced tea and with a health-conscious frown for the vapor of two-dollar cigars, staring intently at every speaker in turn, now staring at Ted Roussos over the remains of his cold jellied salmon with the deep-eyed concentration of a man whose daimon senses a challenge. "You have a good point, a small point but a good point. 'Just' and 'fair' are only words until somebody decides what they are supposed to mean. On Abaco, I will decide. That's the *big* point, isn't it?"

Right you are, Mike. Chesty Mitch WerBell and Big Jack Muldoon and Smart Walt Mäckem and Courtly Lord Belhaven in their bespoke three-hundred-dollar suits and club ties and hand-rubbed Peal's cases, and Bob Bayard in his craggy silence, and all the other N.C.P. staff (New-Country Project is what *that* stands for) and special personnel drawing contract pay on or about Abaco are ultimately only meant to enforce what Mike Oliver considers just and fair and desirable. Ted Roussos knows it, too; he resigns from the project the day after the luncheon meeting. But no one else does. Why should they? Mike Oliver is here, after all, not just as the founder and constitutional creator of a perfectly serious American new-country movement, but in representation of a powerful syndicate of financial backers. It is, above all, Oliver who is making independence an imminent reality for the citizens of Abaco, most of whom have never heard his name.

But among the driven, troubled, questing financiers of America, Oliver is more than a name. To many business leaders he's a miracle worker, a minor prophet on the crumbling walls of the city, a farsighted sentry registering the approach of the forces of darkness. For a specter is haunting America—a new apparition of four space-age horsemen: Inflation, Unemployment, Depression and Chaos. And

providentially, at this critical juncture in mid-1974, Michael C. Oliver, in association with Mitchell WerBell, offers the driven rich an alternative: not just some backcountry hidey-hole, but citizenship and residence in an entirely new country; a newborn commonwealth wholly dedicated to the protection of private wealth and the survival—indeed, the *revival*—of the classic free-enterprise system.

Long before the Dow hit the five hundreds, and coffee went up to fifty cents a cup, long before old people began eating dog food and farmers dumping their calves into ditches, Mike Oliver foresaw that the free-enterprise economy was doomed in America. It sounded strange at first, coming from Mike Oliver, this single-minded belief in devaluation, decline and fall, for in the mid-Sixties the dollar was still the fixed star of the economic firmament, the U.S. economy was booming, and Oliver himself seemed the very embodiment of the American dream of success: a European immigrant to the U.S. at eighteen, he had made his first million by thirty (real-estate development, construction) and 1965 saw him living on a charming wooded estate in Nevada with a pretty wife named Betty and three lively children. Approaching fifty, Oliver was the president of several medium-sized corporations, a settled, influential community leader and the employer of a ravishingly beautiful secretary named Vicky Jo Todd, who was crowned Miss Nevada in 1970. Yet for almost ten years, where other businessmen and economists saw only progress and prosperity, Oliver divined a long-range trend toward depression and disaster.

Worldwide travel and an intense reading of economics helped convince him by 1965 that, as he told a visitor years later, "They're going to screw up the money." He felt certain that debauchery of the dollar would lead to political crisis, inflation, and ultimately to some sort of dictatorship.

"Once I saw that the dollar was kaput, that whatever the government did would only make matters worse, I dumped my stocks and bonds and switched to a strong position in gold coins. Everyone laughed, except my friends; my friends said I'd gone crazy. Well, as you know, it turned out that I'd made some pretty sharp bets in the money market, and instead of calling to suggest where I could get some psychotherapy, my friends called to (*Continued on page 151*)

THE NEW-COUNTRY CAPER

(Continued from page 64) ask where I was getting my investment tips. And, while I began making some real money by '69-'70, it wasn't because I had good financial advice. Just the opposite was true: all the investment advisers and trust officers and analysts and forecasters and market consultants were betting the other way, they couldn't read the handwriting even when their noses were against the wall, and so—I beat the market. Let me tell you, not many people do. And the way it happened, it wasn't any tips or charts or portfolio managers; what really happened was that by 1965 I'd become a student—a *disciple*, really—of Professor Ludwig von Mises."

Professor von Mises, the longest-lived (ninety-two), most prolific (nineteen books) and least self-effacing economist of the Austrian School founded by Böhm-Bawerk, died in 1973 in New York City (where he'd been teaching since 1940) just as, after a half century of obscurity and neglect, his teachings began to enjoy a renaissance here, much the way Karl Marx came into vogue in Eastern Europe at about the time the siege guns of the Red Army became audible in the distance.

Had more people listened to Von Mises in time, there would be more gold millionaires like Oliver today, and although not many did, the professor's tiny coterie of admirers often compared him in epochal stature to Karl Marx—a Marx of ultraconservative capitalistic convictions, of course.

Von Mises was a polymath and his teachings are complex, but some of the principal doctrines are not difficult to grasp. Von Mises believed that human freedom and laissez-faire capitalism were one and the same thing. He had passionate, sacramental faith in the market, not as a mere institution—the sort of vulgar "computer" seen by Keynesians which the government can tinker with whenever it needs to—but as a metaphysical process which regulates all human affairs. Much as one cannot hope to fix a fine watch with a bung starter, Von Mises was convinced that government could not intervene in economic affairs, in the providential workings of the market, without causing damage. "Interventionism" was a self-defeating, vicious circle: the first governmental intrusion into business necessitated a second to stem the ravages of the first, then a third one to undo the worst consequences of the second; then a fourth intervention to alleviate the trauma of the third . . . Von Mises despised "interventionists," the whole brainless, sniveling lefty lot of economists, bankers, policy planners, sociologists, who advocated governmental participation in *anything* with an economic aspect; he even opposed free public education above the grade-school level. And Von Mises was evangelical in his belief that unless mankind learned to value, adopt and defend laissez-faire capitalism as its paramount social system, it was headed for chaos and slavery.



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Antonio Y Cleopatra.

Chaos and tyranny—that is what Mike Oliver foresaw as early as 1965, the inevitable result of America's "interventionist" and "collectivist" fiscal debauchery. That he made millions of dollars in gold profits along the way did not really reassure Oliver, it merely confirmed his premonitions. Of course, the profits helped: to people who tend to think in terms of money—that is, most of us—they seemed to prove that Oliver had something.

To tell the world what he had, Oliver wrote a book in 1968: *A New Constitution for a New Country*. Printed privately, never noticed in a book review, written in pedestrian declaratory style, the book has thus far sold 19,400 copies through the mail—proving that there does exist that contradictory thing, a genuine underground best seller.

The subtitle on the cover reads: "Has the Time Come To Abandon the United States?" Oliver's answer is a firm "Yes." The book tells why, and how. "The United States can no longer be saved from severe crisis. . . . Though not yet under complete tyranny, prevalence of totalitarian ideas and increased use of suppressive measures prove that the end of freedom is in sight [in America]. . . . [Only] those who arrange for a timely departure will escape the coming horror."

The book is not a tract; it's a plan of action. If Ludwig von Mises is indeed the Karl Marx of monetary libertarianism, and Harry Browne, the best-selling author who invented Peter Panic, perhaps its Bakunin, its prolific pan-destructionist, then Mike Oliver is its Fidel Castro—the ultimate militant who redefines the doctrine in terms of total action. Browne's book, advocating that self-sufficient people withdraw to "retreat homes" for safety, has snowballed into an all-season best seller; but it's Mike Oliver who is about to show them how to do it.

"The person with self-respect has a right to preserve his life and freedom," Oliver's book reassures the reader. "But he has no duty to stay in a country whose government policies will destroy him."

The country Oliver is describing isn't Nazi Germany; history is a cruel joker—this time around, it's the United States. "Means for effective action to save freedom in the United States in the foreseeable future no longer exist. Thus, the freedom-loving person has no choice: leave, or be destroyed."

Fortunately, "a surprising number of nearly uninhabited, yet quite suitable places for establishing a new country still exist. . . . The exact location of the new country cannot be revealed at this time. Yet, one has but to look at the western hemisphere to find that places for establishing a new, fair-sized country still exist."

And now, that "fair-sized country" has been found. Its conquest is within Mike Oliver's reach. How things have changed in the few years since 1968! A powerful consortium of frightened new-country seekers, wealthy and influential men who would have laughed at

Mike Oliver's strictures a short while ago, are supporting his campaign with money and anything else that might be required. Whatever you need, Mike; just say the word, Mike. And the most important acquisition of Oliver's well-endowed New-Country Project has been the meeting and the alliance with Mitch WerBell and his semi-business, paramilitary organization. Now it's the Oliver-WerBell organization, at least so far as Abaco is concerned. Special personnel are interviewed, recruited, briefed: Walter Mäckem, the scholarly young ex-C.I.A. officer leaves for the Bahamas on his first assignment, Big John Muldoon rents a suite in the Lafayette Building in midtown Washington, Ralph McMullen is dispatched to Miami, along with a pale, quiet former British intelligence officer known only as Grant who is a communications specialist hired to run wireless traffic with the WerBell-Oliver organization's agent network on Abaco. . . . coded wireless traffic, five-digit groups and all that jazz, the way a proper intelligence station does it. The skeptical Ted Roussos is soon replaced with another U.S. ex-intelligence officer who is not merely enthusiastic, this lean young hard-charger named Charles Boyle, he is, best of all *black*; off he goes to work among the silent, sun-wrinkled fishermen and lobster trappers of Abaco.

And yet who but Mike Oliver is destined to comprehend it, to encompass it, to direct it all? Who but Oliver understands that the campaign for Abaco is not another banana-republic land grab, that this is an ideological, yes, a *moral* movement? Who makes sure that the ideas of free enterprise and unfettered market capitalism find *some* expression in every leaflet, pamphlet or newsletter that the Oliver-WerBell organization produces for distribution on Abaco? AIM DEMANDS CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES WHICH WILL ELIMINATE THE POWER OF GOVERNMENT TO ARBITRARILY LIMIT PERSONAL RIGHTS! AIM DEMANDS AN IMMEDIATE END TO GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF BUSINESS ENTERPRISES. AIM DEMANDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A 'LAND TRUST!'

Do the silent, bare-legged men and women of Abaco really demand all this? Why ask? Mike Oliver has it all thought out for them. *Auteur* of a remote-controlled independence scenario, he means to be a *bon patron*—not just the remote manipulator, but in time the efficient and productive manager of the affairs of Abaco. One question remains to be settled here at lunch.

"We are sure that our special personnel will seize and hold control on Abaco when U.D.I. comes," Oliver says, turning directly to Lord Belhaven. "What I'm still worried about is the attitude of the British government. The Pindling regime in Nassau will urge military intervention by the British when they realize that their constabulary is no match for our men. We want to be sure that intervention does not take place. Do you think you can do it?"

Lord Belhaven is an urbane, unflappable veteran of over ten years in the House of Lords. He is an enormous im-

provement over the first British lobbyist Oliver attempted to retain to represent the interests of the Abaco campaign in London—a Scotsman named Colin Mitchell with a reputation for being mean-tempered and overbearing, a late lieutenant colonel of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders who was serving a term in Parliament as a Conservative.

Colin "Mad Mitch" Mitchell was a shock. Brought over to WerBell's Atlanta estate on the usual all-expenses-paid trip to meet some of Abaco's sponsors, Mitchell turned out to be abrasive and relentlessly acquisitive. To help Abaco along, he wanted a large fee. . . . a very large fee. His visit was not a success.

Lord Belhaven is different. Keeping an eye on Oliver, calmly but as carefully as the American is watching *him*, he decides not to explain the complexities of influencing Her Majesty's Government. "Oh, absolutely," he tells Oliver with an encouraging smile. "Not to worry. I don't think London really cares what happens in the Bahamas, you know—too many bloody miseries at home. I've already tabled a question on Abaco for next week in the House, and we'll keep up the pressure, I'll promise you that. By the time U.D.I. is due. . . . no, I don't think we should worry too much about serious trouble from London."

"Well, U.D.I. is all set: New Year's Day," says Oliver. His face is suddenly different; the intense stare turns into a warm, almost affectionate grin. "Until then, good luck, everybody, and back to work. There's lots to be done."

The men rise in silent agreement. The *Tischgespräch* is over: within twenty-four hours the Oliver-WerBell organization is back in high gear. The path to U.D.I. is lined with a thousand tasks; connections to be coupled, mingled parameters separated, contingencies re-planned, "operational capabilities" to be "actuated."

Robert Anthony Carmichael Hamilton, thirteenth Baron of Belhaven and Stenton, jets back to London overnight, pensively sipping Isle of Islay Scotch in a front-cabin V.I.P. seat. A fortnight or so is spent planning and tabling motions, and on June 10, at half past two of the clock, with the House of Lords reassembled after the Whitsun recess, the Lord Chancellor on the Woolsack, the Bishop of Portsmouth having read the proper prayers, Lord Belhaven rises to address the peers of the realm in a voice of singular gravity:

"My Lords, I beg leave to ask the Question which stands in my name on the Order Paper. The Question was as follows: To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the Government of the Bahamas urging them to cease their harassment of the people of Abaco."

Lord Goronwy-Roberts, parliamentary undersecretary of state, stands to respond for the government: "My Lords, the Abaco Islands are an integral part of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, which became an independent sovereign

State on July 10, 1973. It would not, therefore, be appropriate for Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to seek to intervene in the internal affairs of the Bahamas."

Lord Belhaven and Stenton: "My Lords, I thank the noble Lord for that reply and appreciate what he says. . . ." And although the people of Abaco have not, on the recent record, demonstrably suffered harassment, and Lord Belhaven knows it, there is a subliminal sense in which it's all quite true. To lure the government into proclaiming and reiterating the principle of nonintervention in the newly independent Bahamas is one of the subtler goals of Lord Belhaven's strategy.

Lord Goronwy-Roberts is densely, gratifyingly energetic about it all: "My Lords, this is the case of an independent country. . . . My Lords, independence is independence." If that dictum hardens into dogma, if only by sheer force of repetition, the Oliver-WerBell organization will have a free hand on Abaco: Washington, for its part, is not likely even to consider intervention. In the meanwhile, Lord Belhaven has once again, as on a number of previous occasions, impressed upon the House of Lords that the plucky, oppressed little Abaco suffers.

In Powder Springs, Georgia, where Col. Bayard is sweating five special personnel trainees from Abaco down at the machine-gun range behind the fishpond of Mitch WerBell's farm, it is nine o'clock in the morning. Dusty, strained, poyeyed from the jabbing of rapid-fire recoils, the colonel and his boys, whose diurnal "duty tour" begins at six a.m., take a break. In boxy little electric carts of the sort used by golfers, they roll silently across the close-cropped lawn of the WerBell estate, up to the manor house where they draw "midmorning rations"—country ham sandwiches, pecan biscuits, cold milk in fourteen-ounce glasses. Then it's down to the rifle range for three hours of marksmanship instruction with a remarkable training device devised by WerBell himself: a standard 7.62 N.A.T.O. military rifle converted to fire .22 long-rifle cartridges. It's a low-cost, low-noise, practically recoil-free way to teach a man how to hit a Dr Pepper can at seventy-five yards with a military firearm, and it works: the men who make it through this drill are thereafter known, in the special WerBellian nomenclature compounded from the lingo of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the intelligence establishment's invisible war, as "sniper qualified." They are, too.

Six hundred miles or so southward as the courier plane flies, the Oliver-WerBell organization's Miami headquarters is humming with activity. Vicky Jo Todd, the long-legged, melting-diamond-eyed Miss Nevada of 1970—who, having married one of Mike Oliver's young vice-presidents, is now known nonprofessionally as Mrs. Ralph McMullen—is busy preparing a "packet pickup" for the pilot who makes the biweekly liaison-plane run to Abaco. Into the carefully masking-taped cargo cartons go letters to agents on Abaco; spare parts

for a shortwave set on the blink; books (Ayn Rand: *For the New Intellectual*); packages of bumper stickers and windshield stickers for panel trucks apostrophizing the Pindling government's incompetence and corruption, written by Oliver's executive assistant Dave Scholl; and bunches of other goodies best shipped directly and informally since they would only annoy the Bahamas government if spotted passing through the regular customs channels.

Two weeks have passed since that table d'hôte at Duke Zeibert's, and Mike Oliver, having flown more than twenty thousand miles, is back in Washington at the Gramercy Inn (single room, \$28.50) talking on the phone to Mitch WerBell, who is also back in Washington but at the grand luxe Madison Hotel (Monroe Suite, \$95 daily). Oliver is expecting an important visitor—important because, however well devised and executed the Abaco plan may be, it cannot succeed without investors and colonists—new citizens for an all-new country. This afternoon there is to be a "participant briefing" for just such a prospect. He is Frank Bond of Baltimore, owner of Holiday Spas, a far-flung physical-culture chain. Bond, a spectacularly successful young tycoon known to hold strong libertarian views, has expressed his interest in buying a share of the Abaco project, and I am able to sit in on the briefing while Oliver explains his dreams for the future of Abaco.

Frank Bond arrives late, after eleven at night, accompanied by a short, greying lawyer and an air of coiled impatience. Bond is young, unexpectedly young for a self-made millionaire, slim, dark, dressed in a black suit which looks rich but somehow too *nouveau*. He has already had at least one long talk with Oliver, but the attorney, as he puts it, "knows from nothing" about Abaco. It's just as well, for assembled to greet the two potential participants there are Col. Bayard, Mitch WerBell and of course Oliver—a synergized trio wound up to deliver a socko briefing.

The lawyer begins with the usual question about Abaco as a potential tax shelter, and Oliver fields it with practiced ease.

"Keep in mind what we are building on Abaco is not a tax-shelter nation," he says. "It's a tax-free nation. Have you read any of our planning papers? Have you seen my book? The constitution? No? Well, maybe Frank told you"—the lawyer shakes his head dubiously. "Anyhow, basically what we are structuring on Abaco is this . . . maybe I better read it to you from the constitution . . . *Preamble: We, the people of Abaco* . . . and so on . . . here' . . . *that the only true and proper function of government is to protect its citizens from force and fraud, and that this government is limited to that function only.*' And here on the next page: *'Government is limited to protection against force and fraud, and may not impose any social or economic structure upon any persons or entities within its jurisdiction . . .'* because, you see, we say here further down that government

is *' . . . hired by participants to protect their personal rights against external and internal force and fraud.'*"

"What you mean to say . . ." says the lawyer.

"Well, for instance, you see what we mean if you go to page thirty-eight," Oliver overrides him. "Here Article Twenty-seven says—this is *Fiscal Matters*—that *'No government agency, branch or level shall pass any law, regulation or other restriction with the effect of establishing a legal tender or otherwise requiring the acceptance of any form of money, currency, coin or other medium of exchange; except as provided by voluntary contracts or by mutual consent voluntarily arrived at between persons or entities.'* And here, down at paragraph four: *'The financing of government activities shall be accomplished by voluntary payment of premiums by persons wishing to participate in the services of government. . . .'* Do you follow what this means? First off: the government of the independent Republic of Abaco will have no power to issue money. This is *very* important, more important than . . . Frank knows how important this is. Private financial houses will issue all our money and they'll guarantee it. There will be no Federal Deposit Insurance on Abaco, no government loan guarantees or banking regulations. Nothing like the Federal Reserve. No central bank, as you can see—no central bank, no involvement with the International Monetary Fund."

"The money will be backed in gold," says the lawyer questioningly.

"The money will be *in* gold, at least some of it," says Oliver. "Some of us who were the first participants have drawn up the charter for a bank, and we will issue the 'rand,' the basic unit containing .23 troy ounces of gold—a handy medium-sized coin worth about fifty dollars at present rates. Named after Ayn Rand, you understand, not after the South African rand. There'll be quarters and perhaps quintals, the quintal worth just about ten dollars. Then of course we'll have to have paper money, backed either in gold or other stable assets. All fully gold-convertible—you want your wages in gold, you just pay the issuer a visit."

"And if an issuer defaults . . ." says the lawyer softly.

"They won't default," says Oliver. "The assets will have to be there, covering the value of the issue, and if there's any funny business, it's long jail terms for everybody and his accountant—that would be first-degree fraud. But of course self-regulation will probably suggest that issuers carry bankruptcy insurance for triple safety—*privately* written insurance, mind you."

"And public services—I'm thinking of the police, the judges, garbage collection, you know what I mean—those will be financed by whom?" asks the lawyer.

"They'll be financed by voluntary premiums," says Oliver. "Voluntary in the sense that you go shopping voluntarily—nobody rattles handcuffs at you to make you buy groceries, but you buy some just the same, week after week.

Those who pay the yearly premiums will be known as 'participants' and they'll be entitled to the services the government provides; those who don't, won't be. Whatever services private business can provide competitively will be left to private enterprise."

"Like the police?" the lawyer smiles. "There's a cute deal—if you don't pay your premiums, they can't arrest you for overtime parking."

"Well, no. Not really," says Oliver. "They can't arrest you for overtime parking *anyhow*, because this government won't have the right to tell you how long you should stop your car at the curb—why should it? But if you're guilty of force or fraud, you'll be arrested whether you are a paid-up participant or not. What a nonparticipant won't have will be the right to conduct civil litigation, to set up a surrogate trust, to collect damages on a tort, and so forth."

"What sort of a government will it be, anyhow?" asks Bond. "I mean as an organization. How will it be run?"

"Well, in some ways it'll run just like the government here," says Oliver. "Just like the U.S. Government. The constitution calls for a bicameral legislature. An assembly elected on a proportional basis and a senate. And there, you see, the similarity stops. Abaco will have no foreign service like the State Department, only trade representatives in countries where business demands it. It will have no public school system. Beyond the fourth grade, there'll be only private schools, privately maintained."

"No school system," says the lawyer. "Why not?"

"Because what is called the school system in the United States is really an indoctrination system," says Oliver. "It's a system for bureaucrats to brainwash young people in favor of collectivism and statism."

"And socialism," says Bond approvingly.

"Yes. In the high schools and colleges, in favor of outright socialism," says Oliver. "This is not to say Abaco won't have an educational system of its own kind, but every school will have to be financed privately, by the families of the students or private benefactors. It will mean, here and there, some hardship, some long-term borrowing, maybe—and *that* will be made feasible at very low interest, I expect—but collectively it will mean the survival of freedom in its one essential provenance—in the minds of the next generation. Because, you see," Oliver holds his bony finger before his face to silence all interruptions, "Abaco is not going to be another banana republic. That's not the point; I wouldn't spend an hour's time just to make some money that way. The point is that the Republic of Abaco will be, first of all, a moral experiment, a place where we'll try to keep individual freedom alive even if it doesn't survive in America."

"But won't you need an army?" says Bond doubtfully.

"Oh, sure, Abaco will have its armed forces," says Oliver. "We will call them

peace-keeping forces, because that is what they will be. Abaco will never make war on another land. All voluntary, of course. Here soldiers start out all wrong. They are made to swear a mortal oath and stand to attention for the national anthem. Abaco won't have a national anthem, because the government of Abaco will have no suprapersonal, para-legal, special powers, it will function only as the hired servant of the participants who pay for it. The Abaco peace-keeping volunteers won't be made to salute any metaphysical emblems, or take theistic pledges the government has no right to invoke; they will sign a two-year or five-year or any-year contract, as the conditions may demand, just like any hired craftsmen. I suspect it will be a damn good little force."

"Well," says the lawyer, who has been glancing at his watch with rude frequency. "Well, Frank, if you think..."

"Yes," says Bond, rising too, "we gotta go. Call you in the morning, Mike, and we'll talk."

"One more question," says the lawyer. "You got the natives, five, ten thousand natives..."

"Seven thousand," says Mitch WerBell, "maybe eight or nine at the most, if some who are working in the hotels in Nassau return after independence."

"Right, say eight thousand natives," says the lawyer. "How can you be sure they'll buy all this—vote for your constitution and all that? After all, the place *belongs* to the natives."

"Well, we're training quite a few natives with leadership potential," says WerBell. "Political indoctrination, and so on. They'll organize a following, maybe half the population, that'll go along with us, vote the way they're supposed to. And Bob here, Colonel Bayard, he's also training some natives with good potential, except he's training *his* boys how to shoot at a moving target without missing. And we figure the natives who won't buy what we tell 'em—they'll listen to Bob Bayard's boys."

"Fine, call you tomorrow, nice to've metcha, bye..." And Frank Bond and his counsel are gone. Mike Oliver is depressed. "God almighty, I talk too much... What do you think, Mitch?" For an instant, he is as drained as an actor after the performance. "Shoot, Mike, you were *great*..." WerBell is gung-ho as ever, but Oliver is already peeling off his shirt. "I'm going to bed. G'night everybody."

But at breakfast it's a different story. "Frank called before eight this morning—he's really turned on," says Oliver. "He's putting up ten thousand cash as a sort of foothold on Abaco, he said, and next week we'll talk serious money. He *loves* the project."

"As long as it looks like a good deal," WerBell growls in a hung over voice.

"That's what his lawyer said," Mike says happily. "And I told them, no, as long as you care for freedom, because *that's* the big point. And you know what Frank said? He said, 'Mike, you are *absolutely* right.'" #

THE WINNING OF CHER

(Continued from page 85) Records; Cher was with Sonny. They were already separated but Geffen didn't know this; he promptly fell in love. In September of 1973, the only date in his life that he remembers with any accuracy, Geffen, Bob Dylan and Robbie Robertson of The Band went to see Neil Young's show at Geffen's club, the Roxy. A friend told him Cher was alone and wanted to join them. "Cher said, 'Let's get together for dinner,' and we were never apart since," says Geffen with a small preen in his voice. After the taping of the last Sonny and Cher show, David and Cher surfaced together at the Grammy Awards. That produced the famous butterfly-emergent picture of Cher, bare midriffed, in white with a butterfly over one ear and another in her cleavage, and a shaved-for-the-occasion Geffen, in his sharpie tux, on her arm. It was Cher who talked him into the Corniche Rolls with the wire wheels. Cher who threw out all his shirts and dressed him. And now because of Cher and their mutual psychiatrist, Dr. Martin Grotjahn, he can go into this boutique on the Strip and have the two \$345 suede jackets fitted and ask if they have a third so he will have *one in every possible color*.

While Cher brought him to this California ostentation and flat-out American exuberance, Ahmet Ertegun influenced Geffen in another way. Ahmet was so composed in his power, so relaxed at handling the totally wrecked rock stars who'd come crashing off planes, fall into his arms, rip the shirt off his dignified back and expect to be taken home for dinner. Even now with Ahmet, at a time when they still expect to be cochairmen of the Atlantic/Asylum board, Geffen gets that Brooklyn-boy look on his face as though he is going to ask, "Is this an ashtray?" before dumping his cigarette. His whole New York world of the high-up Pierre suite and the chauffeured car that is waiting, motor running, for Mr. Geffen when he emerges from Ahmet's town house at two a.m. is blown, and he is back to the time when he had gone to Ahmet in 1968. It was the second or third time they'd met, and Geffen, then managing Laura Nyro and supporting them both, was broke and trying to sell Ahmet an artist. Ahmet asked what it would take to keep Geffen going for a year. Geffen said fifty thousand dollars, naming the figure he had been making when he ran the Ashley Famous music department, the figure that represented wealth to him when he was a busboy in the Catskills and being rich meant having a Cadillac and living on Ocean Parkway. "If you earned fifty thousand dollars a year, that was the most any man could possibly ask for, and that was my goal." Ertegun took out his checkbook and wrote Geffen a personal check. He never allowed Geffen to pay it back. That was style. "He bought me for life," Geffen says. "Every artist I ever came up with after that I gave to Ahmet. I signed Crosby

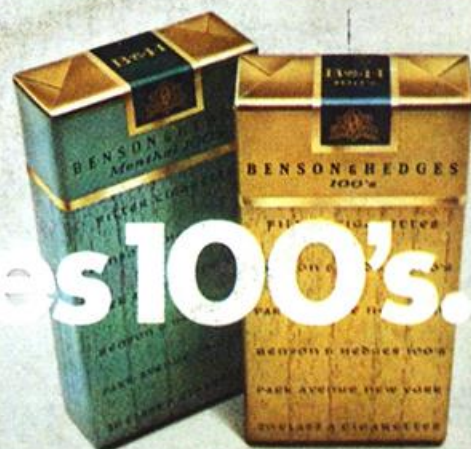


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